

**Amendments to the Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A process for forming a ~~3D woven PI shaped cross section~~ preform having a first portion and a second portion at an angle to the first portion, a first and second foot portions and first and second upstanding leg portions for use in a ~~structure having the first portion being curved, at least one curved portion of a specific length,~~ the process comprising the steps of:

folding the first portion onto the second portion;

cutting the threads treads of the first portion for permitting the first portion to be curved without crumples; parallel to the direction of curvature into over a length equal to the length, such that the cuts in each thread are spaced from the cuts in the adjacent treads;

stretching the first portion; portions of the preform requiring curvature  
unfolding the first portion off of the second portion; and  
forming the first portion into a curve without crumples.

2. (cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) The process as set forth in claim 1 ~~claim 2~~ including the step of impregnating the preform prior to the step of cutting the threads, treads parallel to the direction of curvature into over a length equal to the length, such that the cuts in each thread are spaced from the cuts in the adjacent treads.

4. (Currently Amended) The process as set forth in claim 3 wherein the step of stretching the ~~portions of the preform requiring curvature are accomplished by forming a sine wave pattern in the portions of the preform requiring curvature.~~ further comprises the steps of:

providing a first die and a mating second die, the first die and the mating die defining molding surfaces having a tapered sine wave configuration;

disposing the folded and cut first and second portions between the first die and the second die; and

closing the first die and the second die onto first and second portions.

5. (cancelled)

6. (new) The process of Claim 4 wherein the stretching step comprises the step of closing the first die onto the second die.

7. (new) The process of claim 1 wherein the threads are cut into the curved portion parallel to the direction of curvature over a length equal to the length of the curve, such that the cuts in each thread are spaced from the cuts in the adjacent threads.

8. (new) A process for forming a preform having a curved portion, the curved portion having a progressively increasing radius from a first edge to a second edge, the process comprising the steps of:

providing a stretchable preform;

stretching the preform with mating dies for progressively expanding the preform from the first edge to the second edge; and

shaping the curved portion of the preform without crumples.

9. (new) The process of claim 8 wherein the curved portion is a foot portion of the preform.

10. (new) The process of claim 8 wherein the curved portion is a leg portion of the preform.

11. (new) The process of claim 8 wherein the preform is darted.

12. (new) The process of claim 8 wherein the shaping step comprises the step of forming the stretched preform about a die surface having a final desired shape of the preform.

13. (new) The process of claim 8 wherein the mating dies define molding surfaces having a tapered sine wave configuration.

14. (new) The process of Claim 13 wherein the stretching step comprises the steps of:

disposing the preform between the mating tapered sine wave dies;

aligning the inner radius to a small amplitude end of the mating tapered sine wave dies;

aligning the outer radius to a large amplitude end of the mating tapered sine wave dies; and

closing the mating tapered sine wave dies onto the preform.

15. (new) The process of claim 8 wherein the curved portion is in a plane, the stretching step is accomplished by stretching the preform out of the plane, and the shaping step is accomplished by shaping the curved portion into the plane.